United Nations E/CN.6/2012/NGO/67

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
8 December 2011

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-sixth session
27 February-9 March 2012
Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern, and further actions and initiatives; priority theme: "The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges"

Statement submitted by Dones per la Llibertat i Democràcia, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.6/2012/1.

11-62875 (E) 201211 050112

Please recycle

Statement

[Original: Spanish]

Resolution proposed by Dones per la Llibertat i Democràcia, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations

Dones per la Llibertat i Democràcia ("Women for Liberty and Democracy") is an organization that is headquartered in Barcelona and is active throughout the territory of Spain and internationally, although the core of its activity is centred in Catalonia.

Since its establishment more than 10 years ago, it has been working for the freedom and human rights of women, the elimination of all forms of gender discrimination and equal representation of men and women.

All the activities carried out by Dones per la Llibertat i Democràcia are inspired by the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In February 2010, it was granted special consultative status by the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

The priority theme of the fifty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women is the empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges.

The number of rural women, most of whom are farmers, exceeds 1.6 billion, more than a quarter of the world's population. Women own only 2 per cent of the land and receive only 1 per cent of agricultural loans. Two thirds of the world's illiterate population are women. The number of rural women living in poverty has doubled since 1970. Work by women is often considered an inexhaustible natural resource to be exploited, and the unfair segregation prevailing in the labour market is even becoming more rigid.

In Spain, many advancements for women in rural areas have been pursued and achieved through the ASAJA-amfAR federations and associations and on the basis of European guidelines.

Training in setting up enterprises, companies and cooperatives and creating agritourism and solidarity-based economic enterprises for rural women has been promoted from Catalonia. It has also been possible for a significant number of rural Catalan women to become co-owners with their husbands.

In light of the foregoing, we recommend that all Member States:

- Promote sustainable and integrated growth and create new employment opportunities, especially for women and young people, as well as quality health and social services;
- Point out that the economic and social changes occurring in rural areas do not affect all women in the same way and that, although for some they represent opportunities, for others they constitute a difficult challenge and cause very serious problems;

- Generate growth and promote a social market economy by making full use of the considerable potential of women in the job market in rural and urban areas;
- Point out that many women in rural areas have occupations comparable to professional activity, but do not receive the recognition, protection or remuneration to which they are entitled;
- Point out that only a small number of women own farms, which are usually of limited economic size and low profitability, and that most women in rural areas work together with their male co-workers (fathers, brothers or husbands), who maintain exclusive ownership of the agricultural or livestock farm;
- Report that the employment rate of men and women in rural areas is lower and that, moreover, many women do not even participate in the labour market and, therefore, are not registered as unemployed and are not reflected in unemployment statistics, considering that the lack of high-quality job opportunities severely affects rural areas;
- Draw attention to the fact that the significant contribution by women to local and community development is not sufficiently reflected in their participation in the corresponding decision-making processes in the social, economic and political spheres;
- Promote efforts to ensure that rural areas can offer real opportunities through their growth potential in new sectors and the possibilities in the field of tourism, handicrafts and rural recreational activities managed for the most part by women, which constitutes an important economic factor for underdeveloped regions;
- Require that greater attention should be given to the gender dimension in drawing up budgets to ensure more effective management of rural development programmes and, in particular, that resources should be better adapted to the specific needs of women in rural areas, stressing that the elimination of inequalities and the promotion of equal opportunities for men and women must be mandatory goals in the policies of all countries in the world.